

The College of New Jersey

School of Education

Office of Support for Teacher Education Programs
and Global Student Teaching
<http://www.tcnj.edu/step>

The Cooperating Teacher

The overarching goal of TCNJ School of Education is to create agents of change. The cooperating teachers play a vital role in this effort and in TCNJ's professional education programs. There are times when the cooperating teachers act as a role model, facilitator, peer, counselor, evaluator, instructor, and/or learner. They should be experienced and certified in their fields of teaching, meet the standards set forth by TCNJ, and view the teaching profession in a positive light. The cooperating teachers must personally exhibit high quality teaching performance and commitment to ongoing professional growth, including participation in college sponsored orientation sessions or other pertinent and relevant professional development opportunities for cooperating teachers. These individuals are a critical link in the chain of teacher preparation. Through thoughtful guidance and diligent supervision, they will be able to provide invaluable direction to the activities, methods, and techniques developed and implemented by the prospective educator and model the tenets of the conceptual framework.

The cooperating teacher is expected to:

1. provide the STEP office with personal information to facilitate the payment of all stipends. Cooperating teachers will complete and return the an online Teacher Information Form which will include the submission of a W-9 form. These forms are used to facilitate the cooperating teacher stipend payment. If you were not initially identified as the cooperating teacher, please complete the Coop. Add/Drop Form and return it to the STEP Office;
2. contact the student teacher's/intern's department at the College if you do not see the supervisor once every two weeks;
3. be familiar with the mission and Conceptual Framework for Professional Education;
4. recognize that the professional and legal responsibility of the classroom remains in the hands of the cooperating teacher;
5. accept and nurture the student teacher/intern as a professional;
6. participate in orientation of the prospective educator to the school, organizational structures, and support services;
7. familiarize the prospective educator with communities, families and cultures represented within the classroom and the school;
8. give the prospective educator an idea of what has happened to date in the educational life of a student, when appropriate, to understand the uniqueness of students;
9. explain the classroom curriculum so that the prospective educator can integrate personal experiences with fields of knowledge;

10. acquaint the prospective educator with the yearly plans and work collaboratively to decide what her/his responsibility will be in regards to the overall plan;
11. establish a policy, in collaboration with the supervisor, regarding when to submit lesson plans to be reviewed and discussed with the cooperating teacher. Familiarize him/herself with the expectations of TCNJ for its teacher candidates as outlined in the TCNJ Dispositions Rubric and Lesson Observation Rubric found on the STEP website (<http://step.tcnj.edu/forms/>);
12. discuss with the prospective educator and supervisor a timetable for assuming responsibilities in the classroom:

Typically,

- a. Week 1 – orientation, observation and familiarization with schedules, students and staff. At the discretion of the cooperating teacher, teach 1 or 2 classes;
 - b. Week 2 – students should begin planning and implementing lessons per the directions of the cooperating teacher;
 - c. Week 3 - assume more and more responsibility as readiness to do so is exhibited;
 - d. Ideally, the teacher candidate should be teaching full-time during the last three to four weeks of her/his experience.**
13. provide opportunities for the prospective educator to gain experience in a variety of instructional contexts;
 14. provide the prospective educator with opportunities for practicing a variety of functions, such as participation in team or department meetings, record keeping, using guidance services, one-to-one pupil conferences and parent conferences;
 15. encourage the prospective educator to develop her/his own teaching style;
 16. encourage the prospective educator to incorporate inquiry, critical thinking, creativity, independent thinking, and interdisciplinary approaches in planning for instruction;
 17. work in consultation and collaboration with the supervisor(s) about the prospective educator's progress and alert the supervisor(s) when any problem emerges. **If the teacher candidate is experiencing great difficulty, the cooperating teacher must inform the TCNJ supervisor and outline the specific issues of concern. This should result in a telephone or in-person conference with the supervisor. The issues should be addressed as early as possible in order for the appropriate intervention to be designed;**
 18. guide the prospective educator to analyze and interpret her/his experiences to see relationships among theory, principles and practice, and to engage in reflection;
 19. **provide regular conference time** to discuss with and provide feedback to the prospective educator on matters related to instructional strategies, classroom management, and lesson/unit planning;
 20. make any specific request concerning changes in dates of the culminating experience according to "Calendar and Schedule" policy, to be approved by the department chair and coordinator. These requests cannot be approved by the supervisor(s);

21. complete two formal mid-term and final evaluations of the prospective educator. These forms may be downloaded at:

<http://step.tcnj.edu/forms>

share with the supervisor(s) and return it to the appropriate department of the College. For the secondary education teacher candidate, mid-term and final evaluations must be returned to the Office of Secondary Education and the Secondary Education Department will photocopy and forward copies to the subject departments; and

22. demonstrate positive human relations and professionalism.

How to Begin the First Day...

An introductory conference should be planned between the cooperating teacher and prospective educator at a time that is mutually convenient. During this meeting, both parties should discuss how they would work together as a team.

Suggestions for the first day:

1. Acquaint the student teacher/intern with the classroom and other school facilities such as the media center, cafeteria, offices, restrooms, and parking;
2. Provide the student teacher/intern with the school's policy manual or faculty handbook. Particular attention should be made regarding the school's electronic communication policy with students, parents and staff;
3. Prepare a desk or work station for the student teacher/intern. It is important that s/he has a place to put professional and personal belongings;
4. Supply the student teacher/intern with texts and other materials and information s/he will be using;
5. Have the student teacher observe you at work and take note of the general classroom routine; and
6. Have the student teacher/intern begin to learn students' names.
7. Student Teacher's Load: Each department will provide teaching load requirements which will identify the student teacher's teaching load during the semester.

In the Weeks that Follow...

The beginning weeks should be an orientation process for the prospective educator. This is a crucial time, for these weeks set the stage for the remainder of the clinical field experience.

Have the prospective educator:

8. acquire background information on students with whom s/he will be working and review cumulative records, if school policy permits;
9. gain a general understanding of the various techniques associated with classroom management and those that foster self-discipline;
10. gain an understanding of the school environment and the responsibility of the teachers to the school, community, and profession;
11. observe instruction to see how students react and respond. It is important to have the observer look for certain behaviors that have been identified;
12. observe other classrooms in the school or district;
13. acquaint herself/himself with available technologies and other resources that will enhance instruction;
14. perform routine classroom procedures and assume instructional and managerial responsibilities for the classroom when appropriate; and
15. develop daily lesson plans for short instructional periods.

The cooperating teacher's leadership and guidance will enable the prospective educator to construct and implement effective and appropriate instruction. One of the goals of TCNJ's program is for its students to demonstrate excellence in practice. The cooperating teacher can assist the prospective educator to realize this goal by:

1. sharing "helpful hints" based on her/his own experience;
2. being flexible in responding to changing needs and concerns of the prospective educator;
3. being a good listener;
4. modeling reflective practice that revolves around skills of instruction and knowledge of subject matter;

5. guiding the prospective educator toward using a problem-solving approach;
6. structuring conferences with clear goals and objectives;
7. being clear, direct, specific and honest when communicating with the prospective educator;
8. explaining the reasons behind decisions and suggestions given to the prospective educator;
9. providing encouragement and praise when warranted;
10. encouraging self-confidence and self-reliance;
11. modeling collegiality and professional ethics;
12. being an active learner; and
13. meeting and communicating with the College supervisor to discuss the candidate's progress to date.

Checklist for Cooperating Teacher:

The following checklist highlights some of the expectations, roles and responsibilities of the cooperating teacher. It is meant to be used as a guide as you work with your prospective educator.

Did you...

- _____ 1. have an initial conference with the student teacher/intern before the start of his/her clinical field experience?
- _____ 2. share classroom routines, procedures, policies (including electronic communications with students, parents and staff) and faculty handbook?
- _____ 3. orient the student teacher/intern to the building, community, and resources within the building and community?
- _____ 4. introduce the student teacher/intern to the school staff and the class?
- _____ 5. review the grade level curriculum guides and overall plans for the semester?
- _____ 6. sequence teaching responsibilities so that the student teacher/intern becomes involved gradually in the operations of the classroom?
- _____ 7. model effective teaching?
- _____ 8. review lesson/unit plans and provide feedback before the student teacher/intern teaches the lesson?
- _____ 9. set aside regular conference time to discuss theory and practice?
- _____ 10. encourage the student teacher/intern to be a reflective practitioner?
- _____ 11. complete necessary assessments and evaluations of the student teacher/intern?
- _____ 12. alert the College supervisor if any problems were evidenced and inform the student teacher/intern of same?

